

Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 L-03 MCE-00 AID-05 EB-08 SS-15 ACDA-12
TRSE-00 OMB-01 SP-02 /084 W
-----056941 101513Z /50

P R 101250Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3995
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 03881

LISBON FOR CH MAAG PORTUGAL

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, PO, MR, UK
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE DIVERSION OF LOANED MACHINE GUNS

REF: (A) LONDON 2379; (B) LISBON 1460

1. UK PRINCIPALS OF BOCA INVESTMENTS LTD (JOHN RALPH AND ROBERT BURR) MET WITH EMBREP MAR 7 TO PROVIDE MORE DETAILS OF MAURITANIAN PROCUREMENT AS FOLLOWS: ORIGINAL BOCA/MAURITANIAN CONTRACT WAS FOR SUPPLY OF 5,000 81MM MORTARS, QUANTITY OF M1919A4 .30 CAL. MACHINE GUNS, AND .50 CAL. M2 MACHINE GUNS DESCRIBED IN REF A. SOGANALIAN (WHO REPORTEDLY TRAVELS ON LEBANESE PASSPORT) ENTERED PICTURE THROUGH BOCA'S FRENCH AGENT WHO RECOMMENDED HIM AND HIS FIRM, MIAMI-BASED UNIVERSAL TRADING CO, AS SPECIALIST AIR-SHIPPER IN "DELICATE" GOODS.

2. ACCORDING TO BOCA, MORTARS WERE PURCHASED IN EUROPE. RALPH DESCRIBED THEM AS 81MM BRANDT TYPE PRESUMABLY REFERRING TO THOMPSON-HOUSTON-HOTCHKISS-BRANDT FIRM IN FRANCE - AND DELIVERED TO MAURITANIA BY SOGANALIAN FOUR
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DAYS AFTER PURCHASE AND INSPECTION IN EARLY OCT 1977. THIRTY-CALIBER MGS FROM SEVERAL SOURCES WERE INSPECTED BY MAURITANIAN ARMY CAPT. TRAVELING AT BOCA'S EXPENSE, BUT WERE REJECTED AS BEING TOO OLD OR IN POOR CONDITION. NO CAL. .50 GUNS WERE OFFERED AT THAT TIME, BUT SEARCH FOR SUITABLE SUPPLIES OF SAME CONTINUED THROUGH LATTER PART OF 1977.

3. SOGANALIAN THEN OFFERED BOCA DELIVERY OF .50 CAL. UNITS FROM US, SAYING THEY WERE AVAILABLE FROM STOCK IN FACTORY IN WHICH HE WAS MAJOR STOCKHOLDER. AT THIS TIME, MAURITANIANS DROPPED REQUIREMENT FOR .30 CAL. MODELS AND ASKED BOCA TO CONTINUE SEARCH FOR HEAVY MGS. BOCA AGAIN CONTACTED MAURITANIAN CHARGE IN PARIS AND FUNDED TRAVEL NOUAKCHETT/US FOR SAME ARMY CAPT. FOR EXPECTED FOUR-DAY TRIP. SOGANALIAN APPEARED (FIVE DAYS LATE) AT WASHINGTON OFFICE OF QRC TO MEET OVERSEAS BUYERS AND TOOK THEM TO NUMRICH ARMS CORP. PLANT IN WEST HURLEY, NY, WHERE HEAVY MGS AND SPARES WERE PUT ON DISPLAY.

4. NUMRICH PERSONNEL SAID THEIR M2 STOCKS WERE LOW, AND THAT M3 AIRCRAFT WEAPONS AVAILABLE NEEDED CHANGES TO RECEIVERS FOR M2 (I.E., WATER-COOLED) CONVERSION. APPARENTLY MILLING OF RECEIVERS IS LENGTHY PROCESS; NUMRICH CAPABILITY WOULD BE ONLY 40 UNITS MONTHLY. IN CONSULTATION WITH GOM AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON, BOCA AND PROCUREMENT OFFICER AGREED TO EXTENDED DELIVERY TIME AND NUMRICH'S PRICE OF 4,000 DOLLARS PER GUN. BUYERS AT THIS POINT HAD IMPRESSION THAT SOGANALIAN CONTROLLED NUMRICH. END-USE STATEMENT HAD BEEN SUPPLIED BY MAURITANIAN EMBASSY, PARIS; AT SOGANALIAN'S REQUEST, RALPH HAD DOCUMENT AUTHENTICATED BY WASHINGTON

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EMBASSY. AT SAME TIME, RALPH COMPLETED DSP-83, DELIVERING THESE DOCUMENTS TO REYNOLDS WILLIAMS OF QRC FOR SAFEKEEPING.

5. SOGANALIAN THEN PROPOSED VISIT TO DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TO INSPECT OTHER MATERIAL HE COULD OFFER. (RALPH SAYS US DEALER THROUGH THIS PERIOD HAD BEEN ATTEMPTING ARRIVE AT PRIVATE ARRANGEMENT WITH MAURITANIAN CAPT.) WHEN DOMINICAN MATERIAL TURNED OUT TO BE JUNK, SOGANALIAN LEFT FOR GUATEMALA AND BUYERS RETURNED TO PARIS, WHERE RALPH RAISED 1.12 MILLION DOLLAR L/C WITH BANQUE BRUXELLES LAMBERT S.A. TO PAY FOR NUMRICH'S CONVERTED .50 CAL. GUNS. SOGANALIAN CALLED RALPH IN NOV WITH TWO REQUESTS RELATING TO L/C: (A) TO ALTER DESCRIPTION OF WEAPONS FROM BROWNING M2 TO "TYPE BROWNING M2" (BY WHICH OTHER UNITS MADE BY F.N. HERSTAL PLANT COULD APPLY), AND (B) TO ALTER POINT OF SHIPMENT FROM US PORT TO "US OR EUROPEAN PORT".

6. RALPH HAD L/C AMENDED ACCORDINGLY AND SENT NEWLY-HIRED BURR TO WASHINGTON WITH AMENDED DOCUMENTS AND ORDERS TO SET FIRMLY-FIXED DELIVERY DATE. BURR SPENT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 03881

SEVERAL DAYS IN US TRYING TO LOCATE SOGANALIAN THROUGH QRC AND UNIVERSAL TRADING, EVENTUALLY EXTRACTING PROMISE THAT GOODS WOULD REACH LISBON ON SPECIFIED DATE; BURR THEN RETURNED TO UK. SOGANALIAN HOWEVER PRODUCED AIRWAYBILL LISTING ALL MATERIEL, INCLUDING WEIGHTS, QUANTITIES, SERIAL NUMBERS, ETC, AND USING THIS DOCUMENT, MANAGED TO DRAW ON L/C. RALPH THEN WAS TOLD BY HIS BELGIAN BANK THAT GOODS WERE IN LISBON, APPARENTLY DELIVERED FROM US. THIS WAS IMPRESSION OF BURR WHEN HE INITIALLY CONTACTED US.

7. HOWEVER, IT NOW SEEMS THAT QUANTITY OF GOP-OWNED .50 CAL. GUNS IS UP FOR TENDER AT BRAS DE PLATA AND THAT SOGANALIAN HAS BID FOR THEM. DUE TO POLITICAL CHANGES, BID DECISION HAS BEEN DEFERRED UNTIL TODAY, MARCH 10; THIS DELAY HAS PREVENTED SOGANALIAN FROM MEETING MAURITANIAN ORDER. BOCA'S PRINCIPALS BELIEVE SOGANALIAN WILL TRY TO SUPPLY FROM PORTUGUESE STOCK DUE VASTLY LOWER GOP PRICE. IF SOGANALIAN CANNOT SUPPLY FROM GOP TENDER, RALPH SAYS BOCA WILL SUE FOR SUPPLY OF GOODS INSPECTED AT NUMRICH PLANT, BELIEVING SHIPPING
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DETAILS AND SERIAL NUMBERS CAME FROM THERE. (RALPH ALSO IS CONVINCED NUMRICH WOULD NOT HAVE PROVIDED THIS INFO UNLESS USG LICENSE HAD BEEN ISSUED.)

8. LESS SPECIFICALLY, RALPH INDICATED MOROCCO HAS ASKED GEVELOT OF FRANCE TO SUPPLY 200 CAL. .50 M2 MGS, BUT FRENCH SO FAR HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO SUPPLY. RALPH HINTED THAT IF MAURITANIAN DEAL TURNS COMPLETELY SOUR HE WILL SEEK TO RECOVER HIS LOSSES BY SUPPLYING LISBON OR NUMRICH GUNS TO GEVELOT, AND REIMBURSE MAURITANIANS FROM PROCEEDS.

BREWSTER

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